

## **Personal budgets taken away from 117.000 people in the Netherlands! ENIL Calls for action!**

**The effects of the crisis on disability policy worsen every week. After protests against cuts in Germany, Ireland and the U.K., we even received very disturbing news from so called 'example countries' as Sweden and Norway. Since the beginning of this week we hear rumors about serious slashing in the personal budgets in Holland. 90% of the persons who organize their support and care with a personal budget would loose it ... it seemed to be a bad joke. Sadly it's a bitter reality!**

Ministers on Wednesday agreed to cut costs on personal healthcare budgets by removing the payment altogether from 117,000 people. Starting 2014, only people classified as needing residential care will be eligible for a personal care budget, which is used to help them live independently. MPs have described the cuts as 'incomprehensible' and an 'unheard of attack on the right to health services.

Around 130,000 people who need extra support - such as the frail elderly or people with a disability - currently claim a personal budget to pay for home nursing, personal assistance and other services. People no longer eligible for the extra money will have to look to their health insurance company and local councils for help, the minister said. Health insurers will then decide what extra care is needed and who should provide it.

'We have to limit the personal care budget to those who really need it. The system cannot continue as it is,' prime minister Mark Rutte told reporters after the cabinet meeting.

According to the Volkskrant, the setting up of the PGB system in 1996 has led to people claiming money to cover for services previously carried out by friends and family. Help with shopping, personal care and general nursing can all be paid for by the scheme.

MPs from other parties said the plan will hurt some of the most vulnerable people in society. 'The cabinet is destroying in a couple of years something which has taken 20 years to build up,' Labour MP Agnes Wolbert is quoted as saying by Trouw. 'The cabinet is turning the clock back to the time that people went to a nursing home when they reached 65.'

ChristenUnie MP Esme Wiegman said the changes are being presented as an improvement in quality. 'But they are cuts and that is what we will continue saying,' she said. 'These cuts mean people will be forced back into care homes.'

The cuts have been agreed between the minority government and alliance partner PVV, which supports efforts to cut spending in return for tougher immigration controls.

Fleur Agnes, of the government's anti-Islam alliance partner PVV, said her party would support the reforms. 'They mean an improvement for people who need long term care because they will get an extra 5% to spend,' she said. The support of the PVV means the reforms have a slim majority in the lower house of parliament.

Earlier this year, it emerged the government is considering stopping people with an IQ of between 70 and 85 from using AWBZ-funded sheltered housing or day care as part of its spending cuts.

The Dutch budgetholders association Per Saldo (<http://www.pgb.nl/persaldo/english/?waxtrapp=tdtvrMsHcwOhcPjBCAU>) says that the cabinet takes a vision-less and an irresponsible decision. It will cause many personal disasters and it isn't cost effective at all. People are driven back to care in kind which is more expensive. This so called saving will cost at least 650 million euros. Per Saldo is preparing for hard action to save the PGB, the Dutch direct payments scheme.

Shocking, unbelievable, incomprehensible, not just angry, but furious. That's the mood among all people with disabilities, who have their lives on the right track with the help of the PGB. With the PGB beautiful forms of support and assistance arose, precisely tailored, self-directed by the person in question. Support that an institution does not give. In families who have found a balance, along with a child or a parent with a disability. Partners can continue to live together. Single people who make it in their own environment. The plans of the government threatens all this to get lost.

**We can not allow this to happen!  
Speak up, get organized and TAKE ACTION!**

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**Do not hesitate to contact Peter Lambregts on this matter, he speaks both English and Dutch.**